



*Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton
Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat
Executive Council
Activity Report 2009-10*



Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council, I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2009-10 fiscal year. My signature below is on behalf of the entire council and indicates our accountability for the achievement of the goals and objectives cited within the plan and in accordance with the *Guidelines for Annual Activity Reports for Category 3 Government Entities*



2009-10 has been an active year for regional council members. Besides attending scheduled council meetings, members attended other activities in efforts to meet council's commitments under the Transparency and Accountability Act. Council continues to investigate priorities, engage community, and articulate strategies in preparing advice documents for Government. Priorities selected to positively influence regional sustainability are accessing education, developing aquaculture and accessing health services in Central Newfoundland.

This year council has embraced the opportunity to enhance investigations through community-based research. On behalf of this council, the Rural Secretariat partnered with Department of Geography, Memorial University and Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems (MITACS) to research citizens' perspective on accessing services in rural Newfoundland. In addition to these efforts, council is exploring, with Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council, Nova Central School Board, and Central Health, collaborative approaches amongst organizations.

The Grand Falls- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton Regional Council has worked more closely with Provincial Council than previous years. In response to Provincial Council requests, Regional Council members have deliberated and responded to background papers on regionalism and land use planning. Furthermore, council participated in an experimental province-wide joint Regional Councils and Provincial Council engagement utilizing video conferencing and "*Turning Point Technologies*"

As an advisory body to government, council looks forward to furthering deliberations with government, industry, and regional stakeholders on council's priorities and other issues identified by Government or citizens that impact regional sustainability. Together, we can make a difference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Debbie Armstrong". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and connected.

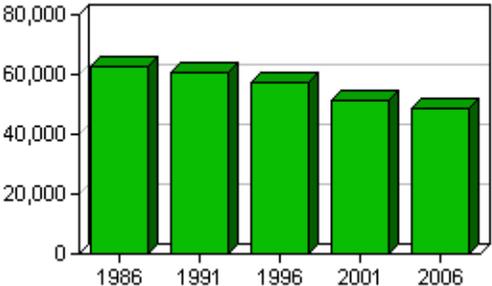
Debbie Armstrong, Chair
Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Overview of the Region

Population



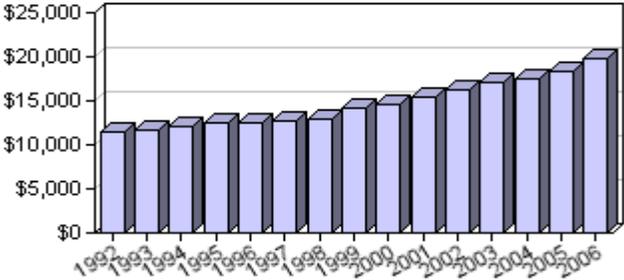
The 2006 Census population for Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region was 48,605. This represents a decline of 5.2% since 2001. Over the same period, the entire province experienced a population decline of 1.5% since 2001 (505,470 in 2006, down from 512,930).

The 2006 income for every man, woman, and child (personal income per capita) in Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton

Rural Secretariat Region was \$19,700. For the province, personal income per capita was \$22,900. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$13,300 for Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region in 2006. For the province it was \$14,900.

Half of the couple families in Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of more than \$46,600 in 2006. Half of the couple families in the province had incomes of more than \$56,500.

Personal Income Per Capita



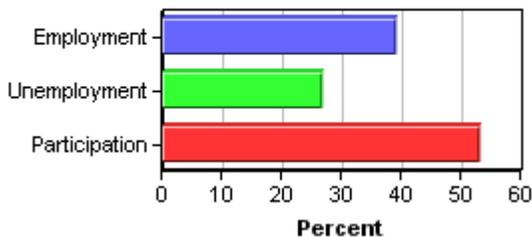
Half of the lone-parent families in Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of less than \$22,800 in 2006. Half of the lone-parent families in the province had incomes of less than \$25,300.

The 2006 self-reliance ratio for Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region was 71.2%. This is a measure of the community's dependency on government transfers such as: Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, Income Support Assistance, etc. The higher the percentage of income that comes from transfers the lower the self-reliance ratio. The provincial self-reliance ratio for 2006 was 78.5%.

According to the 2006 Census, in Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region 82.8% of homes were owned versus rented compared to 78.7% for the province and 68.4% for Canada.

The unemployment rate for May 2006 for people aged 15 and older was 26.7%. The provincial unemployment rate was 18.6%.

**Labour Market Rates
Population 15 and Older
(May 2006)**



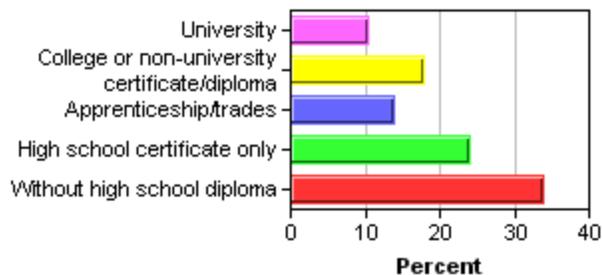
The employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those aged 15 and older was 57.8%. The provincial employment rate for the same period was 63.3%.

The number of individuals in Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region who received Income Support Assistance at some point in the year 2008 was 4,940. The 1991 figure was 10,150

The total number of children ages 0 to 17 in Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region who were in families on Income Support Assistance in 2008 was 1,350. The figure for 1991 was 3,980.

Census 2006 reported 33.8% of people 18 to 64 years of age in Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region do not have a high school diploma compared to 25.1% of people in the entire province.

Highest Level of Education, Pop 18 to 64



In Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region about 9.3% of people aged 25 to 54 had a Bachelor's Degree or higher in 2006 compared to 15.1% in the province as a whole.

In 2006, in Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region, 75.9% of people 25 to 34 years of age had at least a high school diploma. This compares to 85.4% in the entire province and 89.1% for Canada.

A major indicator of well-being is how a person rates their own health status. In 2005, 62.2% of individuals in Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region rated their health status from very good to excellent. The provincial number in 2005 was 64.5%. In 2005, for Canada, 60.2% of individuals age 12 and over rated their health status as very good to excellent.

Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural.

2. Regional Council Overview

The Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council is comprised of 12 members; five female and seven male. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region, including ten members from communities of less than 5,000 people. The council met five times in 2009-2010.

The council does not have a budget and, as such, an audited financial statement is not required in this report. Meetings of the council and associated costs are funded through the budget of the Rural Secretariat.

The Rural Secretariat also funds a regional planner position in the region, who among other duties, acts as an information resource for the council and facilitates the work of council. The planner for the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton region is Linda Brett. Her office is located in Springdale.

Regional Council members	Community
Deborah Armstrong (Chair)	Grand Falls-Windsor
Karen Beresford	Grand Falls-Windsor
Gerry Burke	Baie Verte
Jerry Dean	Botwood
Phoebe Foster	Miawpukek Mi'kamawey Mami'omi (Conne River)
David Hayashida	King's Point
Jamie Kendell	St. Alban's
Hubert Langdon	English Harbour West
Steward May	Belleoram
Don Stewart	Harbour Breton
Joan Strickland	St. Alban's
Bernice Walker	Norris Arm

**For an updated listing of council members please visit: <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/regionalmem.asp> .*

3. Mandate

The Regional Council mandate is:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities of a region.
- To review key regional economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next three years.

- To identify policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the three-year period.
- To advance regional cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage regional partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To nominate an individual to represent the region on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

4. Lines of Business

The Council supports the Rural Secretariat's two lines of business.

- **Partnership Development:** The Rural Secretariat coordinates the development of partnerships that focus on sustainable regional development and provides direct consideration of citizens' and stakeholders' priorities, perspectives and expectations in the development of public policy, infrastructure and other financial decisions, and other provincial government action that impacts regions and rural areas.
- **Formulation and provision of policy advice and analysis with respect to regions and rural areas:** The Rural Secretariat coordinates research and analysis on regional and rural socio-economic issues, provides advice and analysis on legislative, financial, policy, program and service delivery matters that impact regions and rural areas. It also influences and informs cross-departmental analysis and evidence-based decision making with respect to regional and rural challenges and opportunities.

5. Values

The core values explain the character of the organization we promote and the action statements guide behaviour. The core values of the Rural Secretariat, which also guide the behaviour of the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council, are as follows:

Core Values
 Collaboration
 Creativity
 Empowerment
 Inclusion
 Learning Culture
 Transparency
 Trust

Collaboration	Each person is committed to working together effectively.
Creativity	Each person seeks to transcend traditional ideas, rules and patterns to create new ideas, relationships and methods.
Empowerment	Each person is responsible for participating in discussions, making informed decisions and taking personal responsibility for their contributions.
Inclusion	Each person acknowledges others' views and perspectives and has the right/opportunity to express their own.
Learning	Culture Each individual is recognized and valued for the skills that they bring and is encouraged to continue to learn.
Transparency	Each individual gives and shares open and objective advice based on sound information and principles.
Trust	Each person is open and supportive when participating in partnerships and follows through on requests and commitments.

6. Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Regional Council include the Rural Secretariat, the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, and departments and agencies within the provincial government, among others.

The council will also engage individuals, groups and organizations within the region as it carries out its work.

7. Vision

The Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

Sustainable regions with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities.

Through its work, the council is identifying priorities that contribute to regional sustainability which considers economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.

8. Mission

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the council. It represents the key long-term result that the council will be striving towards as they move forward. The priority focus areas support the strategic directions of the provincial government. The statement also identifies the indicators that will assist both the council and the public in monitoring and evaluating success. The council will report on its mission statement in its 2010-11 Annual Report.

The mission statement of the council is as follows:

By 2011, the council will have participated in an ongoing community engagement process that will show the value of two-way communication between the provincial government and citizens.

9. Report on Performance

In its 2008-11 Activity Plan the council identified four goals. The activities and performance of the Council with respect to each of the goals as outlined below, is in support of the provincial government's strategic directions for the Rural Secretariat (Appendix A). In particular, the Council's performance allowed for the development of new partnerships with various stakeholders at the regional level, and provided a new regional forum to discuss citizens' perspectives on regional and rural sustainability. The Council recognizes that these strategic directions are long term in nature and believes that its activities in 2009-10 and beyond will further support these directions.

9.1 Issue 1: Communication

In identifying communication as a priority, council aimed to develop a logical process which would help them: (i) reach agreement on the priorities for change and (ii) investigate these priorities. This process is outlined in a communication protocol document, which articulates this process for government and community stakeholders. It uses a four step logical approach:

1. Priority selection is based on establishing an asset inventory and conducting a strengths and weakness analysis of the inventory.
2. Priority development is a systematic planning cycle of primary and secondary research with Council members.
3. Issues identification recognizes a rationale for intervention and then proceeds to identify macro to micro policy initiatives. These initiatives determine potential initiatives and other advice from the council to government.

4. Recommendation selection includes a criteria assessment which determines the critical elements to be presented to government.

Through this protocol, the process that it will use to identify future priorities, issues and recommendations will be transparent and accountable. Government and community stakeholders will have access to their methodology through the communication protocol.

Goal: By 2011, the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have strengthened communication with the provincial government and citizens on matters of regional and provincial interest.

2009-10 Objective: By March 31, 2010 Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have evaluated the process of establishing and investigating regional priorities and advising the provincial government.

Measure: Council will have evaluated existing Communication Protocol

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Regional Partnership Planner surveyed Council members regarding Communications Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council completed Communications Protocol survey in September 2009.
Communication Protocol modified as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Partnership Planner modified Communications Protocol document based on survey results • Regional Partnership Planner printed and distributed modified Protocol to council members. • In February 2010, Council agreed, by consensus, that the revised Communication Protocol document reflects their process of establishing and investigating regional priorities for advising provincial government.

Council evaluated its communication protocol document which stipulates a standard process of identifying and investigating priorities it believes impact regional sustainability. To meet the goal of strengthened communication with provincial government and citizens on matters of regional and provincial interest CWRC members choose to articulate how they investigate regional priorities, issues and recommendations. The importance of communication is in the clarity and transparency of decision-making. By 2011, Council hopes to demonstrate how it progressed from having little communication with provincial government and citizen stakeholders to having articulated a transparent Communication Protocol document, distributed advice documents on matters of regional sustainability and openly invited further discussion on these issues.

2010-11 Objective:
By March 31, 2011 Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have improved communication with the provincial government and citizen stakeholders on matters of regional and provincial interest.

2010-11 Measure:

- Improved communication with the provincial government and citizen stakeholders on matters of regional and provincial interest

2010-11 Indicators:

- Council will highlight communication activities pre and post implementation of the communication protocol.

9.2 Issue 2: Education

In 2009-10, education continued to be an issue for council. After submitting an education advisory paper to government in 2008-09, council members strived to communicate their informed regional perspective on educational delivery with key individuals in the departments of Education, Child Youth, and Family Services, HRLE and Finance as well as interested citizens. Council continues to believe and wishes to communicate that all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, of all ages, should have equal access to quality education regardless of geography. This does not mean that education must be delivered in the same way, but that all citizens should have equal opportunity to access quality education.

Goal: By 2011, the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have communicated an informed regional perspective on specific areas affecting education delivery.

2009-10 Objective: By March 31, 2010, Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have engaged with citizens and stakeholders to communicate on identified educational issues.

Measure: Council have engaged with citizens and stakeholders and communicated identified educational issues.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Council distributed education advisory paper to citizens and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the initial submission to the Department of Education, council subsequently distributed the education advisory paper to departments of Child, Youth and Family Services; Human Resources and Employment; and Finance. Each Minister received an accompanying correspondence outlining which strategies impacted their departments. • Council mailed a printed advisory document to all municipalities in the Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat region. • The education advisory paper was distributed to all Chairpersons of School Councils within this Rural Secretariat region. • All K to 12 school principals received a printed copy of the education advisory document.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In May 2009, council in partnership with the Gander - New Wes Valley Regional Council, hosted a conference "<i>Many Voices, One Vision</i>" which brought educators, health authorities, citizens, and government officials together to discuss regional sustainability. The education advice document was distributed to invited participants.
<p>Council held discussions on educational issues with citizens and stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council arranged a meeting with Department of Education personnel. Council representatives, along with Gander –New-Wes-Valley Regional Council representatives from the Department of Education and extensively discussed educational issues identified in the advisory document and Subsequently, council invited the representatives to a Regional Council meeting, where participants debated the need to connect students to full educational opportunities, the merits of multi-age / multi-grade schooling and the challenges of distance education for high school students. Honourable Susan Sullivan, Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment and her staff met with council representatives focusing on strategies that remove barriers to training adults. Council wrote the Poverty Reduction Committee demonstrating their support and hoping to influence the Committee in prioritizing funding for after-school bussing. Planner had a follow-up conversation with their personnel. Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Child Youth and Family Services, replied to council’s advice on life-long learning acknowledging their advice and responding to each child care strategy. Although a submission was made to the Minister of Finance highlighting the benefits of child care tax credits, council did not receive a response to date. March of last year, council representatives attended an educational forum in Corner Brook where council members shared their views on accessing educational services in rural communities. Although this activity was in the past fiscal year, it helped members to articulate and defend their perspective with others, before meeting with regional and provincial stakeholders. In May, council in partnership with the Gander - New Wes Valley Regional Council, hosted a conference "<i>Many Voices, One Vision</i>" which brought educators, health authorities, citizens, and government officials

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
	<p>together to discuss regional sustainability. Panelists outlined their present challenges to the sustainable provision of healthcare and educational services within the region and participants debated solutions. A comprehensive report was distributed to all participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequently a working group, consisting of key stakeholders and citizens, continued the discussion and prioritized the debated solutions. This working committee identified specific collaborative approaches it hopes to action in the coming year.

These accomplishments demonstrate how council was able to engage with citizens and stakeholders on specific issues related to education. Through research, compilation and distribution of the education advice document and subsequent discussions, Council identified challenges and suggested actions on delivering education in Central NL. It is through these efforts Council has communicated an informed regional perspective on education delivery

2010-11 Objective:

By March 31, 2011, Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have engaged the provincial government on specific issues related to education.

2010-11 Measure:

- The council have engaged the provincial government on issues related to education.

2010-11 Indicators:

- The council discussed educational issues with provincial government.

9.3 Issue 3: Aquaculture

According to Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the wild fisheries are approaching their sustainable limit and predict by 2030 there will be a 50 to 80 million tonne shortage of seafood. It is projected that 50 percent of the global demand for seafood will have to come from aquaculture. Given the above demand, the history of aquaculture development in the region and the potential for aquaculture growth, the council determined that the expansion and management of this industry could be a strong economic pillar for regional sustainability.

Goal:

By 2011, the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have communicated an informed perspective on regional sustainability in developing the aquaculture industry.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010 Grand Falls -Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have collected and studied sufficient information to prioritize aquaculture issues pertaining to regional sustainability.

Measure:

Council will have collected and studied sufficient information to prioritize aquaculture issues.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Council engaged with provincial Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and industry stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council representatives attended Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association (NAIA) annual general meeting where members engaged with provincial Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (DFA) officials and industry stakeholders.• Council representative participated in presentations and discussions at NAIA's Green Bay Mussel Showcase and Coast of Bay's Salmonid Showcases; upon Council's request, the Rural Secretariat sponsored the two events.• Council representatives participated in the aquaculture waste management community meeting following the Salmonid Showcase. This prompted Council to invite Multi Materials Stewardship Board director Ed Evans to present Central Newfoundland's waste strategy and its implications for the aquaculture industry.• Council's planner, on behalf of Council, interviewed representatives from Northern Harvest Sea Farms.• Representatives from the Atlantic Salmon Federation, Cooke Aquaculture Inc, and NAIA presented and extensively dialogued on regional opportunities and challenges within the industry.• These discussions built on conversations with the representatives from Cooke Aquaculture Inc. and NAIA as well as mussel and salmonid tours conducted the previous year.• Upon completion of investigating prioritized aquaculture issues the council submitted an advisory aquaculture document to Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture and Minister of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development.• Minister Jackman responded with written correspondence.• Subsequently, a representative from DFA met with Council, reviewed strategies individually, agreeing with the need for study and development of some, rationalized others, and disputed the remaining points.• DFA's representative agreed to return, within 18 months, to report on the Department actions and progress relating to each of Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council's

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
	<p>identified issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Besides these exchanges the Regional Partnership Planner, on behalf of Council, had conversations with provincial and regional personnel. • Council distributed their aquaculture advisory document to MHAs whose constituency lies with in the Rural Secretariat region, Provincial Council, and other Regional Councils.
<p>Council prioritized identified aquaculture issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of Council conducted a literature review which included the following documents and websites: Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance web site; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) web site; Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association web site; Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance web site; <i>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's The Economic Review 2007; Strategic Plan- Newfoundland and Labrador Aquaculture, 2000; Seafood Industry Year in Review 2007, 2006 and 2005; Office of the Auditor General Newfoundland and Labrador, Review of Departments and Crown Agencies January 2009; Atlantic Salmon Federation Report on Aquaculture May 2009; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Strategic Plans 2006-2008 and 2008-2011.</i> • Council focused on the immediate, the medium (5 -10 years) and the future (10 to 20 years) needs of the industry. In each category Council has prioritized issues they feel are critical in developing the industry from a broad regional perspective. • Issues Council prioritized were; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immediate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bio-security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Waste management • Bay management areas • Sustainable management plan ▪ Secondary processing 2. Medium (5-10 years) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expansion of current research and development ▪ Coastal advisory council ▪ Government's role as supporter and manager of processing activities ▪ Department of aquaculture 3. Future (10-20 years)

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extension of research and development to alternative species ▪ Integrated multi-trophic aquaculture

Based on the accomplishments made in 2008-09, the council was able, in 2009-10, to communicate, to government, an informed regional perspective on aquaculture development as it relates to regional sustainability. Council members recognize that its 2008-11 Activity Plan require them to communicate this perspective in 2010-11 but they have completed this task ahead of schedule, in 2009-10. Within the parameters of its objective for 2010-11, the council will communicate its aquaculture perspective to regional stakeholders and Provincial Council.

2010-11 Objective:

By March 31, 2011 Grand Falls -Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have communicated an informed regional perspective on aquaculture development as it relates to regional sustainability.

2010-11 Measure:

- The council has communicated their aquaculture perspective to regional stakeholders.

2010-11 Indicators:

- The council distributed aquaculture advisory document to regional stakeholders.
- The council distributed aquaculture advisory document to Provincial Council.

9.4 Issue 4: Health Care

Accountability, public communications, quality assurance, access and timely availability of health services have dominated the health debate within the council. Although this is the latest priority of investigation, the council wishes to learn residents' perceptions on accessing health care in rural communities.

Goal:

By 2011 Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have developed an informed regional perspective on regional health care in relation to sustainability.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010 Grand Falls -Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have completed research related to regional health services as its relates to regional sustainability.

Measure:

Council has completed research related to regional health services as it relates to regional sustainability.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Council compiled research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on presentations and discussions held on population health and primary health care with senior Central Health personnel in 2008-09, the council researched documentation from <i>Central Health</i>; such as <i>Central Health Annual Performance Reports</i>, and <i>Central Health Strategic Plans</i> and had one on one conversations with community members in their region. • The Regional Planner, on behalf of Council, joined the Central Health's Community Advisory Committee to gather information on local issues as well as assisting in setting strategies to address these issues. • In May 2009, council in partnership with the Gander - New Wes Valley Regional Council, hosted a conference "<i>Many Voices, One Vision</i>" which brought educators, health authorities, citizens, and government officials together to discuss regional sustainability. Council collected data on healthcare as panelists outlined their present challenges to the sustainable provision of healthcare and educational services within the region. Subsequently, participants, in break-out groups debated future resolutions. A comprehensive report was distributed to all participants • Through the collection of the research efforts cited above, Council determined their focus within health care.

Based on these accomplishments, council has completed the regional research necessary to identify specific issues regarding regional health services. From this selection, council focused on accessing health services in rural communities as a priority. In the coming year, council will engage citizens in refining a regional position on this topic. Securing citizens views will inform council of a regional perspective.

2010-11 Objective:

By March 31, 2011 Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have initiated citizen engagement activities to refine regional position regarding regional health services.

2010-11 Measure:

- Council initiated citizen engagement activities to refine regional position regarding regional health services

2010-11 Indicators:

- The council held discussions on health services with citizens and stakeholders.

- Feedback from discussions held will be compiled and refined into a report for submission to government as well as citizens and stakeholders.

10. Additional Highlights

The Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council aims to provide input and advice to the provincial government on long-term opportunities and challenges facing the region. Council strives to be a regional voice for citizens identifying key economic, social, cultural and environmental issues crucial to sustainability. This is a long term process that will require ongoing collaboration with citizens, stakeholders and interests in the region.

The council feels that its performance in 2009-10 has allowed it to make advancements in this process. The council is providing an open and transparent means for rural perceptions, realities, opportunities, challenges and potential solutions to be discussed, debated and deliberated. The council encourages more integrated thinking and decision making for the future. Council is committed to examining complex issues from a holistic long-term perspective. It has brought together citizens, stakeholders and interests from differing backgrounds with differing priorities and perspectives, differing bases of information and knowledge, and differing expectations. It has built confidence, leadership and trust, and it has broadened public awareness of issues.

In addition to the points raised in Section 9, three additional highlights are worthy of mention. These are consistent with the Rural Secretariat's strategic directions and mandate, and will serve to inform the work of the council in 2010-11.

This year council has embraced the opportunity to enhance investigations through community based research. On behalf of this council, the Rural Secretariat partnered with Department of Geography, Memorial University and MITACS to research citizens' perspective on accessing services in rural Newfoundland.

Council is working more closely with other councils. In response to Provincial Council requests, council members have deliberated and responded to background papers on regionalism and integrated land use planning. Furthermore, council participated in an experimental province-wide joint Regional Councils and Provincial Council engagement utilizing video conferencing and internet "*Turning Point Technologies*" In addition to these efforts, council is exploring, with Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council, Nova Central School Board, and Central Health, collaborative approaches amongst organizations.

Regional Council members attended public consultations and workshops on issues that will influence the Region's sustainability. For example, one council member attended a colloquium on building the social economy in Halifax. Another member participated in MUN's Research Plan workshop in Grand Falls-Windsor. In addition, other council members participated in the Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat's round table discussions held across the region. They were able to provide input on the challenges and possible solutions to assist that sector.

11. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

As the nature of the work of the council is broad-based and long-term in nature, the challenges and opportunities faced by the council remain fairly similar from year to year. The council feels that these challenges and opportunities can be categorized along four themes.

Provision of Policy Advice to government

The council's mandate commits it to reaching consensus on the priorities for change in its region and to identifying policies and programs to encourage desired change. The challenge for council, given the range of issues, perspectives, interests and needs within its region, is to reach consensus on priorities for change and on policy advice to provide to government. The opportunity for council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can both provide informed bottom-up policy advice to government as well as respond to top-down policy level requests from government that may impact on the region

Regional collaboration

The council's mandate commits it to sharing information, advancing regional cooperation and to encouraging regional partners to more actively participate on matters that can advance regional sustainability. The challenge for Council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can advance collaboration. There are two opportunities for Council. First, it can position itself as a broad-based and cross-sectoral advisory body that can lead, participate and/or support regional collaboration across a range of sectors, communities and interests. Second, as a broad-based advisory body, it can identify the various supports necessary to foster collaboration and provide advice to government to advance efforts to provide such supports.

Long-term thinking

Long-term thinking continues to be an opportunity and a challenge. Council believes that long-term thinking is essential to achieve regional sustainability, it provides an opportunity to set a shared priority goal and to, collectively, define the steps required to achieve the goal. Thinking long-term developing across the region.

Community based research

Rural Secretariat staff work with regional partners and Regional Councils to develop community-based research initiatives. These initiatives gather data at the regional level giving stakeholders involved the information and background knowledge they need to effectively advise the provincial government on regional and rural policy issues. Council can use this opportunity to delve more deeply and attain evidence based information on their identified priorities.

Appendix A: Strategic Directions

Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one Government entity. These directions are generally communicated by Government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents, and other communiqués. The Transparency and Accountability Act requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across Government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments.

The directions related to the Rural Secretariat are as follows:

1. Title: Regional Partnership Development

Outcome Statement: Stronger and more dynamic regions.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

- Partnership Development
 - Within regions
 - Between government and regions
- Forum for informed discussion and priority identification that links economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability.

2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability

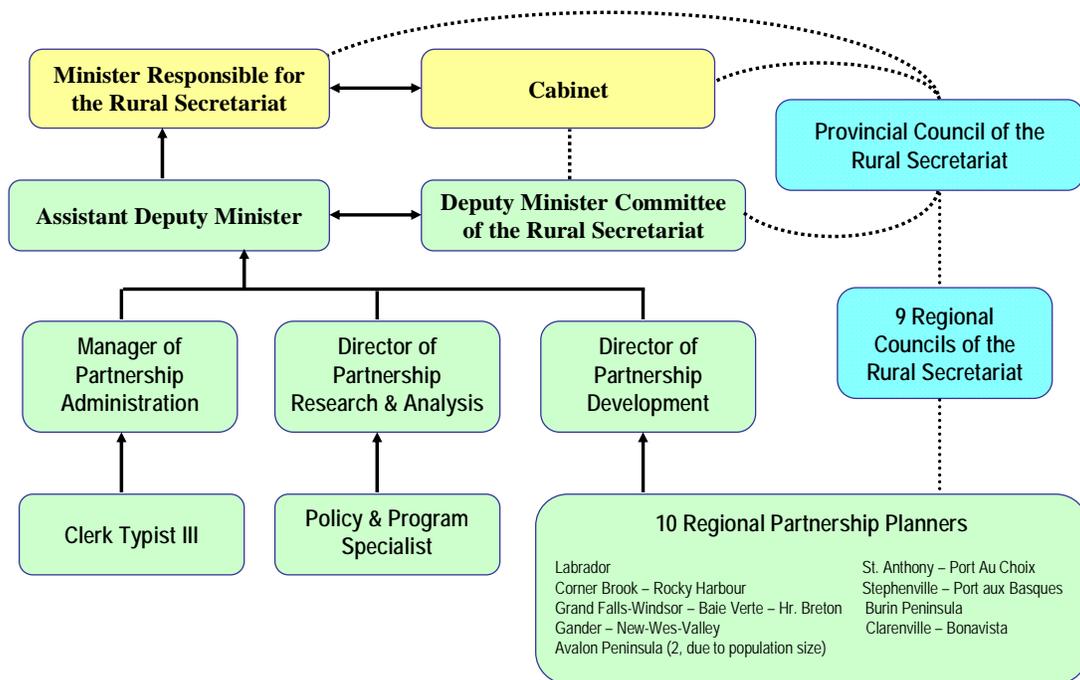
Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

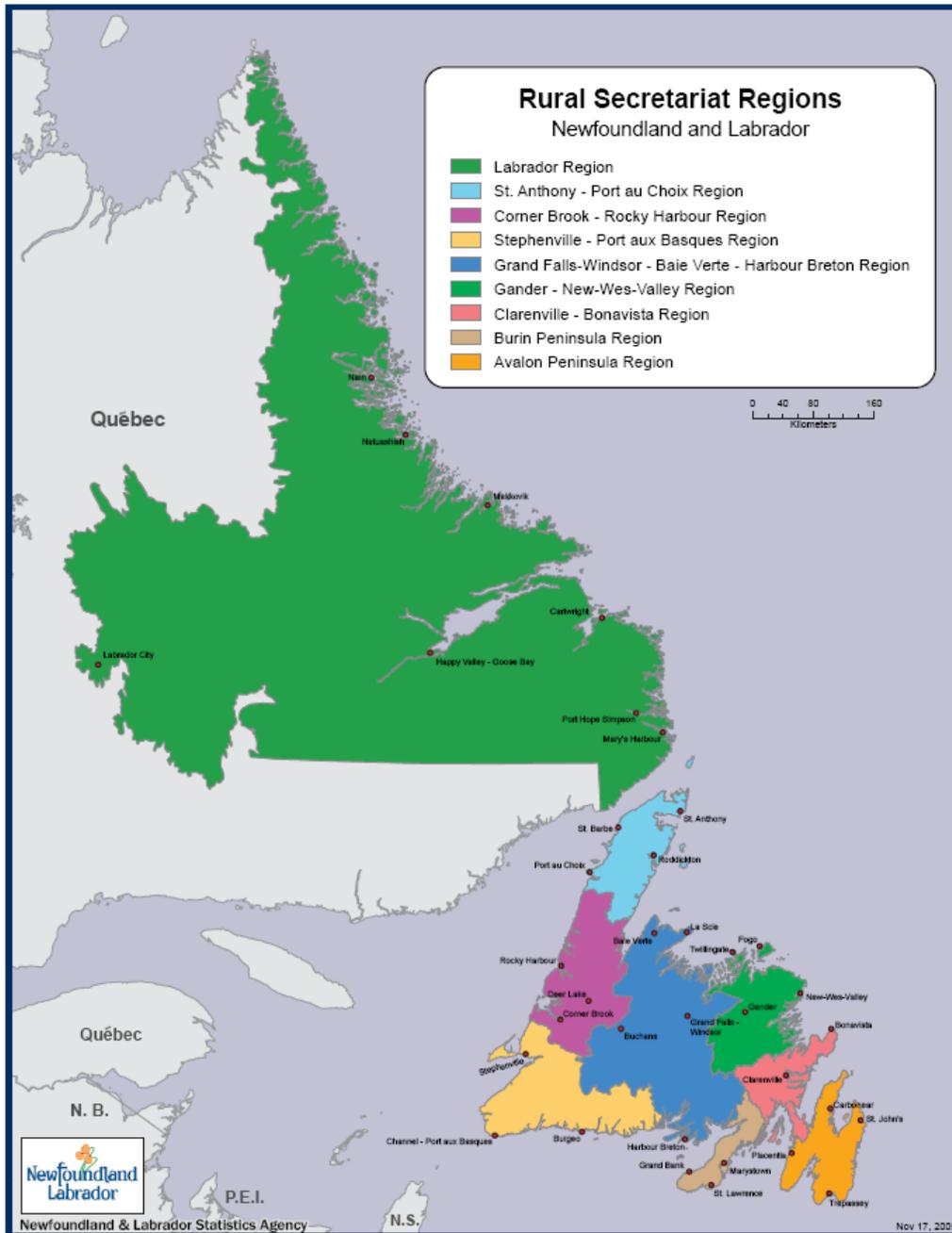
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

Appendix B: Organizational Structure

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions



Appendix D: Mandates of Rural Secretariat and Regional Councils

Mandate of the Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:

- Promote the well-being of all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive and coordinated approach to economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional development.
- Act as the focal point for government to work with local and regional partners to build strong and dynamic regions and communities.
- Ensure that regional concerns are considered throughout the provincial government and promoted at the federal level.
- Carry out research and analysis of economic and social issues affecting all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Help communities and regions identify and take advantage of growth opportunities.

Mandate of the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

The Provincial Council's mandate is to:

- Develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing the province.
- Review key provincial economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- To identify and advise the provincial government on policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change.
- Advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage government and community partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- Serve as an external sounding board for government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will affect provincial and regional sustainability.

Photo Credit:



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